As Mr. Wingright Sees It

—John Cogley

THE

Commonweal

Politics and Change

by Peter Viereck

The Spirit of Lent

by H. A. Reinhold

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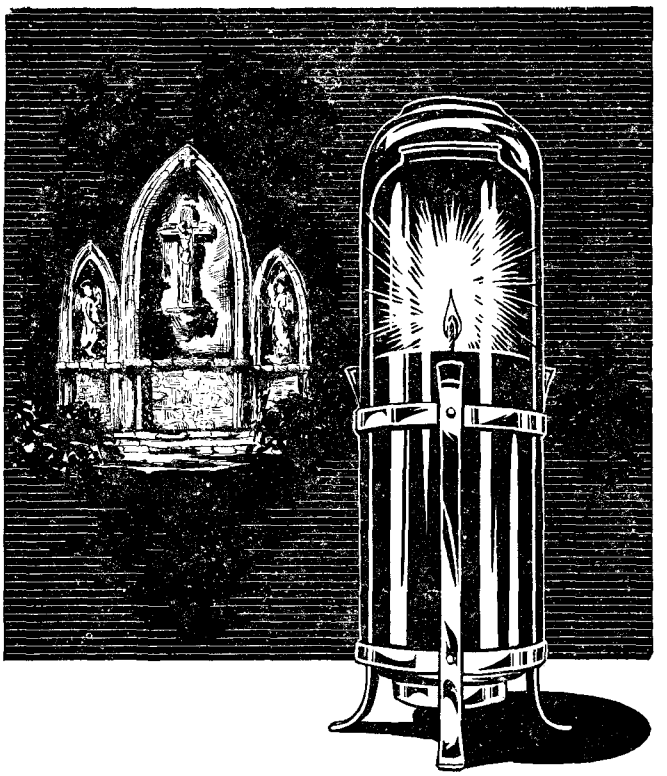

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The Commonweal

week by week

"AMORAL OR INSANE"

PEOPLE who read this magazine often have contradictory conceptions of what our editorial position is in foreign affairs. Readers more ready than we are to see a solution in pacifism sometimes refer, more or less jokingly, to our "war policy." Every time we favor military firmness against Communist expansion, they sigh and remind us that Communism can never be defeated by arms alone; every time we protest the cuts in the military budget, they despair of us.

Then there are others who apparently think of us as appeasers, and, understandably enough, their letters, like their policies, tend to be more belligerent than those of the pacifists. Thus our recent support for President Eisenhower's efforts on the Formosa question brought a letter from one reader with a gift for the succinct phrase. Our editorial policies, he said, were amoral. But if we thought any possible benefit to the free world could come from the neutralization of Formosa, then he would know that we were not amoral but insane.

How do we ourselves conceive our editorial position on foreign policy? The danger now faced by the free world is clearly as great or greater than that in Hitler's time. But one element has been added which changes the entire equation. That element, of course, is the existence and nature of thermonuclear weapons.

The destructiveness of modern weapons has long been debated and deplored. But the power of the hydrogen bomb goes so far beyond traditional weapons that it seems to represent, not a change in quantity, but a complete change in quality. Intercontinental war fought with thermonuclear weapons would be of a different kind from all previous wars. In the face of this fact, historical parallels from the thirties lose much of their meaning.

The world today is confronted with a unique situation. The power of the H-bomb is so monstrous that it is hard for the human mind to comprehend it. Given the right wind-direction, for example, the fall-out from a single H-bomb could wipe out the entire population of Long Island. It could blanket with its fatal fog almost the entire area of New Jersey. Two dozen H-bombs could kill fifty million men, women and children in the United States. A relatively small number of bombs could render England uninhabitable; a similar number could turn Western Europe into a desert.

In view of all this, one fatal misstep could make the civilization we know a thing of the past. Some scientists even fear that the cumulative effect of "too many" H-bombs would be the total destruction of the human race. Certainly, a thousand years of history can now be erased overnight.

YET describing the horrors of the H-bomb does not give the complete picture. The face of the Soviet is clear and monstrous. Communism probes here and there in the underbelly of the Western world, seeking for soft spots. Wherever it can, its armies strike, and freedom dies. Even with the threat of the H-bomb, can one advise surrender to enslavement and tyranny? We certainly will not, cannot.

What, then, remains? The West must avoid enslavement. It must also, if that is possible, avoid the tragedy of H-bomb warfare.

Achieving this dual purpose is not easy. Under such circumstances foreign policy does not tend to be dramatic. There are no quick rescues, no easy solutions. No guarantee of success exists, even in achieving limited goals. The major efforts tend to be directed toward a preservation of peace and the status quo, as far as that is possible. This is not pleasant. No free man, for instance, likes the idea that other men are captive behind the Iron Curtain. We certainly do not, but we have to admit we know no way by which their release can now be accomplished. The West can harass, it can broadcast, it can spread leaflets; all such things may help a little. Men in the West must remain morally indignant over the fate of men enslaved. But they must remember the H-bomb cannot set them free.

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What of the future? Our vision is limited, as is that of other men. We see no prospect of any sudden easing of tension. We see no chance that the Russians will forget how to make the H-bomb or that they will tomorrow lie down like lambs. We see no bright prospects. We can hope and look for internal dissension in the ruling clique inside Russia, plus failure in the system itself, with all the possibilities that this would bring. But right now all we see is a chance to choose, not one clear good, but between various evils.

The horror of H-bomb warfare represents one evil; enslavement by the Soviets is another; preservation of what is more or less the status quo, with freedom prevailing in one part of the world and tyranny in another, is a third evil. Of these three, we would cast our lot with President Eisenhower's efforts to preserve the present delicate balance, while waiting for future opportunities for more positive action.

This course demands patience. It demands strength. It means building up so the Soviet Union can find no weak spots when it probes. It means more money for arms, not less. It means attention to conventional weapons as well as to the new arms, with the hope of keeping war to brush-fire rather than H-bomb proportions. It also means recognition that moral indignation and practical power, unfortunately, are two different things; that there are some evils in the world against which we are now powerless to move without producing greater evils. This policy means, we fear, preferring a world that is considerably less than perfect to no world at all. This is not much of a choice, but it is the only one we see right now.

NEXT WEEK

MRS. GEORGE NORMAN writes on Max Jacob, the French artist who died in a German concentration camp in 1944.

"In spite of what sounds to us a positively repellent oddness and a physiognomy to match, Max Jacob had an attraction so great that it was said to be difficult to be with him without loving him. He gave out a vitality: you *lived* with him, laughed as he did at life, soared with him into a world of pure revelry. But that was only one side of a mysterious and deeply involved nature; at one moment he was the wild clown, singing, dancing, spouting verse ribald or otherwise, the center of a gathering—in a flash grave, silent, even morose. You never quite *had* Max if you were only one of his supposed intimates."

THE NEED FOR SCHOOLS

ANY bill to provide federal aid for education is *per se* in for a rough time. The bitterness of past debates is not forgotten. The greatest need for funds is found in the Southern states, several of which are today the most adamant in not complying with the Supreme Court ruling on school segregation. Moreover, there is a deep-seated and not always unreasonable fear that federal aid inevitably means federal control or domination.

But with shortages of school buildings and classrooms at present crisis proportions in many areas, and inevitably due to get worse the next few years, there is a feeling that past fears and criticisms may give way. In any case the Administration's aid-to-states school bill is clearly the result of a strong public demand.

Although the need for new facilities and enabling funds is recognized by virtually all hands, the bill sponsored by Senator H. Alexander Smith is assaulted from all sides. The most vehement of all the criticisms appear to emanate from spokesmen for the National Education Association itself. The Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee has heard in no uncertain terms that the financial aid contemplated for the various states and localities is too little and would materialize too late, the program is of a long-range rather than an emergency character, the interest rates provided for state borrowings from the federal government are excessive, and this federal-state pattern would involve too high a degree of federal control.

Alongside these contentions and complaints from public school authorities, who would benefit from such provisions, the protest of the National Council of Catholic Women that parochial school children would be counted in for determining the aid to go to each state (although non-public schools would not be eligible for these government subventions) sounds comparatively mild. The impelling and ever-increasing need of additional public school facilities supplies no guarantee whatever that the road to providing them can be anything but stony.

BULWARK AGAINST COMMUNISM?

WHEN Princess Margaret tours the British Dominions to engender Empire goodwill, she need only be her attractive self. She has simply to put in an appearance and gracefully respond to the plaudits of the local populace. In his compass of the Americas Vice-President Nixon can wave, too, but that is hardly enough to accomplish

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his mission among the fellow-nations of this hemisphere. Mr. Nixon, like many another official visitor to a foreign land, is expected to make a series of fulsome and ingratiating comments.

The process is a familiar one. The only problem day after day is to decide what feature of each new national landscape or local institution expressly to admire. Here there must be praise for native industry or ingenuity, there for some historic or artistic achievement. Such comments are none the less warmly welcomed for being universally expected.

Hence there was nothing very surprising or spectacular in Mr. Nixon's congratulating the Archbishop of Guatemala on the grounds that the Catholic Church had proved to be such a "bulwark against Communism and totalitarian ideas." Some American Catholics may view this as a decidedly back-handed compliment or have felt that this was setting the cart before the horse, to say the least. The Church assuredly diminishes in stature if it is viewed primarily as a policeman of any sort. But it hardly pays to take such passing remarks in a diplomatic context such as this one very seriously.

However, Dr. John A. Mackay, president of the Princeton Theological Institute, has seen fit to seize upon the occasion to attack the whole concept. His reaction to the bland Nixon phrase is a tirade of several paragraphs directed primarily at the Church in the Latin countries, which he cites as "breeding grounds for Communism."

These are familiar charges—and in some Latin American countries not without some foundation. They do assume a greater degree of influence on the part of the Church authorities in those countries than actually exists. But the ironic thing is that an offhand remark by a goodwill ambassador should have set off such fireworks.

CONSERVATIVE JOURNALISM

THE Los Angeles *Tidings,* which in McCarthy-language might be described as a West Coast edition of the Brooklyn *Tablet,* recently published a front-page interview with William F. Buckley, Jr., whom the *Tidings* described as "a seasoned rightwing fighter at 30." Mr. Buckley was in town, the paper reported, "on reconnaissance for his coming campaign to prove that 'Christian conservatism is not dead.' "

As part of his campaign, Mr. Buckley proposes to found a magazine to be called "National Weekly." This magazine, according to the *Tidings,* "will forthrightly oppose the prevailing trend of public opinion, and its purpose will be to change the nation's intellectual and political climate." This looks like a pretty big order, but in Mr. Buckley's view, "the left wins by default principally because there is no organized attempt by the right to vitalize its own philosophy."

"For example," Mr. Buckley claims, "the left has seven national weekly journals of opinion. The right has none." He believes, therefore, that if a forthrightly conservative weekly is founded it will receive wide popular support, because, "Americans [are] disillusioned by the liberal intelligentsia."

We don't know what seven weekly journals Mr. Buckley thinks of as being had by the left, but we agree with him that there is need in this country for a responsible weekly magazine expressing the viewpoint of the right. What has worried us about much "conservative" thinking in the past has been what seemed to us its refusal to make a correlation between political slogans and their actual implications. We therefore hope that Mr. Buckley's new magazine, when it makes week-by-week statements of "conservative" principles, will spell out for its readers what the concrete application of these principles would mean in the real world. The *Tidings* interview, however, does not reassure us on this score.

For example, Mr. Buckley says that in foreign affairs his magazine will have a "pro-liberation" policy: "I am not an interventionist," he claims, "but we are our brother's keeper to the extent that we help free him from slavery. I am a liberationist because I believe that the assumptions of Communism are such as to make coexistence impossible." Asked to explain the practical points of this policy, Mr. Buckley stated: "We favor withdrawal of recognition from Soviet Russia. We favor the abandonment of cocktail talks with Communists. We favor fomenting trouble for them."

Well, this is fine rhetoric and noble sentiment. We are for liberation too, but we don't think it can be magically accomplished by withdrawing recognition from the Soviet Union or even by our diplomats' refusing to drink a cocktail with Mr. Molotov. We certainly don't see how it can come from men opposed to "intervention."

It's a dangerous and irresponsible game to talk easily of "liberation" unless one is willing to accept the full military-economic consequences of what liberation would mean as a national here-and-now policy. We therefore await the appearance of Mr. Buckley's conservative weekly with great interest. In it, we hope, he will be able to solve the major problem facing most conservatives today: the problem of bringing their principles into

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working relationship with a world where slogans mean nothing if they remain divorced from the awful responsibilities of power.

DIFFIDENCE

THE seven days surrounding St. Valentine's day included two events of refreshing unimportance: the Academy Award nominations were telecast and the *New Yorker* observed—if that is not a presumptuous term—its thirtieth anniversary.

The two events were related only by time but were interesting in their attitudes towards themselves. The Academy Award nominations were played through an hour and a half of NBC's golden Saturday night television time with all of Hollywood's accustomed magnificence. The world watched as three nightclubs and a studio were filled with celebrities and cameras. It was all pretty grand, and grandest of all was dear old bobbing, gushing, nearsighted Louella Parsons, whose performance was the funniest thing mass communications has given us since Harpo Marx was around lighting cigars with an acetylene torch.

The *New Yorker*, on the other hand, marked its anniversary with diffidence as conspicuous as a Chinese gong in a flute sonata. The mention of the occasion was dropped like a rose petal into a meditation on what life for the magazine's editors would have been like if Harold Ross had founded the shipping and maritime newspaper he once had contemplated, rather than the *New Yorker*.

But the *New Yorker* at least mentioned the thirty years; as we recall it, that magazine's twenty-fifth anniversary went unrecorded in *New Yorker* columns. So age tells on us all. The *New Yorker* is losing diffidence. A word-year equation of the *New Yorker's* diffidence erosion could probably be calculated on the basis of this year's anniversary note. With the help of mathematics it would then be possible to predict the year—undoubtedly in the next century—when the *New Yorker* will have reached the stage of presenting its own anniversary awards on an hour and a half of Saturday-night television. They undoubtedly will consist of twelve-inch statuettes of E. B. White with his head in a pillowcase.

RUSSIA VS. COMMUNISM

THE speech which Secretary of State Dulles made before the Foreign Policy Association was a complex piece of prose, and not the least interesting of its elements was the plea it made to Russian nationalism.

The Secretary of State was principally concerned, of course, with warning the Chinese Communists not to try to use force against Formosa while informing the Chinese leaders that if they should avoid force they might find their claims on the offshore islands given tacit recognition by the United States. But Peiping was not the only capital which the Secretary was addressing. There was a message for Moscow—for those Russians who had ears to hear.

Mr. Dulles said: "The time may come—I believe it will come—when Russians of stature will patriotically put first their national security and the welfare of their people. They will be unwilling to have that security and that welfare subordinated to the worldwide ambitions of international Communism. If their point of view should prevail, then indeed there could be a basis for worthwhile negotiation and practical agreements between the United States and the new Russia. Then there might be reactivated the historic friendship between our countries and our peoples."

This kind of a statement, with its conspicuous employment of the term "Russia" rather than "Soviet Union," is based on the assumption that the USSR's present uneasiness is a result of clashes of interest between the administrators and pragmatists in the Soviet leadership, and official ideology. Malenkov was supposedly associated with the managerial class—which is more concerned with whether policies work than with their degree of conformation to Party theory. The acute agricultural problem in Russia has not been solved by Mr. Khrushchev's sending urban-bred young Communists and white collar workers to Siberian farms. The response of the population to Malenkov's consumer-goods policies indicated the depth of the Russian desire for the important luxuries of life.

These stresses make the top-level power balance in the USSR a delicate one; the fact that blame is apportioned without respect for responsibility cannot ease feelings very much. If this evaluation is valid, there may be a chance of the Dulles plea finding a response in certain Kremlin quarters.

But probably it will not; the totalitarianism is locked too tight in its own intricacies; too closely held by its own dynamics of ideology and power. But the fact that the plea was made is a sign of returning assurance in State Department planning circles, and is another step away from that confusing of diplomacy with propaganda which has done so much harm in the last two years.

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Politics and Change

WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT THE INEVITABILITY OF CHANGE IS A KEY TEST OF THE POLITICAL THINKER'S GRASP OF REALITY

PETER VIERECK

SINCE the post-atomic world is changing more rapidly than ever before, the attitude of a political thinker toward change and his willingness to accept its inevitability is a key test of his grasp of reality. No conservative is so unrealistic as to deny or refuse change. He differs from others in the framework within which he canalizes change. The radical wishes revolutionary change, outside the free traditional framework; the reactionary wishes counter-revolutionary change, likewise outside the established framework ("back to 1788" or "back to 1932"), or else hopes, like King Canute, to resist change and social progress altogether. The conservative and the liberal both agree in welcoming evolutionary change, as opposed to the revolutionary or counter-revolutionary change of radicals and reactionaries.

Where, then, does the conservative differ from the liberal if both welcome a peaceful, evolutionary form of change? The liberal, in the spirit of eighteenth-century rationalism, conceives change from abstract a priori generalizations, while the conservative—in Metternich's phrase *"tout à terre, tout historique"*—sees change as disruptive to the traditional framework unless it grows organically out of the concrete historical context.

The Tory Prime Minister Disraeli summarized perfectly this distinction between conservative and liberal attitudes toward the change and the peaceful social progress which (unlike radicals and reactionaries) they both welcome. "In a progressive country," said Disraeli, "change is constant; and the great question is, not whether you should resist change which is inevitable, but whether that change should be carried out in deference to the manners, the customs, the laws, the traditions of the people, or in deference to abstract principles and arbitrary and general doctrines."

That this attitude toward change, rather than a suicidal stubborn resistance to democratic progress, is what differentiates the conservative from the liberal is further established by the position of the fountainhead of all modern philosophical conservatism, Edmund Burke himself. Many who call themselves his disciples today and who confuse the suicidal Old Guard Republican attitudes toward change with the conserving of our traditions, should reread his warning of 1790 in *Reflections on the Revolution in France*: "A state without the means of some change is without the means of its conservation."

A further distinction, one of general temperament in one's private life even more than one of politics, is the instinctive reaction to any given proposed change. The conservative's reaction is to put the burden of proof on the innovator; the liberal's reaction is to put the burden of proof on the old order. Both, however, are willing to be persuaded, in either direction, once the burden of proof is presented; and in this they once again differ from the radical and the stand-pat reactionary.

ONE test by which to separate chaff from wheat among "new conservatives" is to ascertain their attitude toward authoritarian nationalism. This is no longer called "fascism" because the "excesses" (to employ a shocking euphemism) of Hitler and Mussolini have discredited that word even among those Americans who share some of its attitudes. Imprecise use of the word "fascism" by appeasers of Russia, against anyone they disapprove, has further discredited the use of the word today. A third reason why it should be avoided in discussing current American thought-controllers (a reason more legitimate, less opportunistic than the earlier two reasons) is that the current authoritarian nationalism in America has special native roots in the direct democracy of Populism and Progressivism; it also has special roots in certain immigrant social groups that rose from slums to suburbs thanks to the New Deal (without feeling grateful to it for that rise).

These special Populist-radical roots and special suburban roots are so uniquely American that it becomes inaccurate to borrow the generic term "fascism" from Europe. Not that the American form is morally much better, but different it surely is; and the term

Mr. Viereck, author of *Conservatism Revisited*, is currently lecturing on American poetry and civilization at the University of Florence.

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"Authoritarian isolationist nationalism," though awkward, seems more accurate. To coin a new word based on the last name of one particular Senator has the convenience of brevity and vividness; the drawback of such usage is that it makes us wrongly overlook the same misdeeds when done in more presentable quarters: for example, certain aspects of the re-opening of earlier-dismissed charges against Oppenheimer, or when it is not a Joseph McCarthy but a Herbert Brownell who accuses a former President of "knowingly" promoting Red spies.

False conservatism imagines it can use such tools as isolationist nationalism or thought-control or pro-Nazi revisionism in order to safeguard—allegedly against "Communism" but actually against reality—those petty, anti-social economic privileges which in the end it loses in any case, inevitably, whether under fascism, Communism, or democracy. Genuine conservatives are as sincerely anti-fascist as they are anti-Communist. Their antipathy to right-wing as well as left-wing doctrinaires and despots can be traced back to Edmund Burke himself.

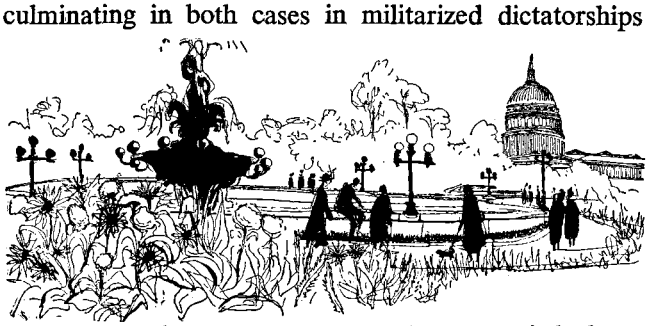
LET us summarize—with the America of today very much in mind—how Burkean conservatism simultaneously and necessarily opposed three things: the abstract a priori liberals of England and America, the radical revolutionists of France, and the authoritarian royal reactionaries of France and England. In 1790, when the French Revolution still was relatively peaceful and enlightened, Edmund Burke virtually "founded" modern conservative philosophy by warning in advance—amid utopian hopes—against Jacobin-style dangers. These dangers of despotism and terror are innate, inherent, whenever utopian a priorists think they can break with the past unscathed.

The innateness of Jacobin-style despotism in France's initial benign enlightenment of 1789-1790 was not recognized by the anti-Burkean liberal intellectuals of England and America. They had hoped that well-meaning, rootless abstractions could violate rooted traditions with impunity. Here the notable point about conservatism is its battle on three fronts: Burke fought not only against French Jacobinism and against the optimistic British and American liberalism that looked toward France in 1790 (as in 1917 it looked toward Russia); he also condemned effectively the injustices of the Bourbon monarchy.

Even earlier, Burke had aided the American conservation of 1776 by fighting bravely against the right-wing tyranny of George III in favor of those more traditional British liberties that George Washington was conserving. The firecrackers of July Fourth celebrate the triumph not of revolution but of restoration. We might properly speak of "The Conservation of 1776." Unlike some rootless Weimar Republic, the United States remains a Bill of Rights society and overcomes its Huey Longs and Joseph McCarthys because its liberty was charted less by Tom Paine than by Washington, Madison, and Burke. Yet that conservative liberty would be rotten in its core if its founders had not been alert against right-wing as well as revolutionary threats. And it will rot today for the same reason if it is alert to no threats except from the left.

In this Burkean tradition, of conservatism as freedom and not as right-wing reaction, stands the world's greatest contemporary conservative, Winston Churchill. The notable point is that Churchill not only warned against Bolshevism in 1918, when it was beguiling many liberals, but also led the world against Nazism. The Churchillian position of resisting both right and left is analogous with Burke's opposing George III in 1776 and opposing not only Jacobinism but monarchical abuses after 1789.

Jacobinism, being the Marxism of the middle class, broke the continuity of history. With "enlightened" and democratic but rootless and arbitrary blueprints, the Jacobin utopians violated the traditional community sense of prescriptive right and historic lawfulness. History, excruciated and spurned, revenged itself in the familiar post-1789 and post-1917 pattern, culminating in both cases in militarized dictatorships



worse than the *ancien régimes* that preceded them. But the rootless and arbitrary a priorism of the Adam Smith blueprints of Old Guard Republicans (Manchester liberals) are likewise utopian, unhistoric, unconservative in spirit—that is, unwittingly Jacobin in spirit. As such, they ought to be more vigorously condemned by Burkean conservatives than is always the case today: here is where philosophical or "new" conservatives in America break with narrowly economic or old-guard conservatives.

IN contrast with Jacobin violations of prescriptive right and of rooted historic lawfulness, the wise concept of "legitimism" was adopted by the conservatives of the Congress of Vienna. In its ultimate sense of history-engendered lawfulness, the legitimism of Metternich, Talleyrand, and Castlereagh need not be confined (as theirs too often was) to hereditary rights

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of kings. The historic right of all citizens, not only kings and aristocrats, are also inherent tacitly in this Burkean-Metternichian concept. These are the historic rights of all citizens, evolved from concrete "lived" experience. Legitimism may be redefined, for us of today, not merely as legitimate succession in monarchy—this is merely one metaphor of legitimacy —but as the principle of unbroken institutional continuity and the unspoken community sense of what is lawful.

Thus defined, the legitimism of the 1950's is the parliamentary, constitutional method of change plus a general community feeling (not expressible in precise economic abstractions) that humane reforms take precedence over laissez-faire. This two-fold legitimism can take place within either a democratic or monarchic framework. I would say, preferably monarchic in the case of Europe because, outside of Switzerland, free parliamentary government has never fared well in Europe unless supported on the traditions of constitutional monarchy. The lack of the unifying monarchical tradition in France (where wrong-headed monarchists did even more than radicals to discredit monarchy) is one important cause for the failure of the Third and Fourth Republics to gain sufficient respect and support. For respect, in countries with old traditions, depends on an aura of legitimacy and historic continuity.

But past monarchies once uprooted can rarely be restored, the magic of continuity being dispelled. And no matter how valuable it would have been to have kept such a lost past, the first concern of the future must be not with an old but with a new legitimism, one combining constitutional procedures with social humaneness. The wonderful quality of an Old Guard Republican like Senator Taft was his loyalty to the first half of that combination: constitutional procedures, which he defended against the short-cuts of New Dealers in a hurry. The wonderful quality about the New Dealers was their loyalty to the second half of that combination: social humaneness and social democracy, which they defended against Republicans like Taft.

The ideal liberal-conservatism of the future, the "new conservative" synthesis, would avoid two things and would serve two things. It would avoid the direct-democracy of the New Deal liberals (with their disrespect for "outdated" Constitutional procedures) and also avoid the social inhumaneness of the Old Guard Republicans. It would serve the old legitimism of constitutional guarantees and also the new legitimism of social democracy.

"ANNUAL CRISIS"

The Spirit of Lent

H. A. REINHOLD

EVEN a superficial look at the Lenten usages observed in our parishes and at the Roman missal discloses a discrepancy. The popular observation of Lent is narrowly concentrated on the passion of Our Lord. Neither the priest's daily prayer book, his breviary, nor the missal follows this pattern.

To the average Catholic the season is a series of negative rules to be observed: don't smoke, don't drink, don't eat enough, don't dance, don't go to shows, don't get as much sleep in the morning because you go to Mass. It all starts out with ashes on a gray morning after a last fling, and the priest's words: "Remember that thou art dust and that to dust thou wilt return" sound a somber note as an overture of forty days severity.

Father Reinhold, Pastor of St. Joseph's Church in Sunnyside, Washington, writes frequently on the Liturgy.

The "athletic" aspect, if it may be called so, prevails. Add to this the mite box full of dimes and pennies, the daily attendance at Mass, the sermons on moral reform, the stations of the cross, and the crowning of it all by the Easter reception of the Sacrament of Penance, and you have a sketch of the hard and fixed tradition in our parishes up and down the land. There is no doubt that the current customs produce salutary results, that the clergy are accustomed to running their parishes in this fashion and that, without a suspicion that there could be an alternative, the people take it for granted that this is the way Lent goes and has gone for hundreds, maybe thousands of years.

One might assume that the large number of people who use a missal at Mass, and especially those who read the notes of the St. Andrew's missal, might feel

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a bit uneasy. I am not talking about the aesthetic malaise of the mental ear that hears instruments playing, so to speak, that are out of tune. This is definitely not a question of aesthetics. It is emphatically a profoundly spiritual question. With the help of a little bit of history, we can see this easily, because when one sees how a thing grew one suddenly understands.

FIRST let it be clear that we are not talking about an unrealistic Utopia. What the documents of the Church offer is so dazzling, so spiritual and presumes such a deep, mature and assimilated faith, that we neither hope to see a change in one generation nor expect the present customs to be entirely absorbed into the liturgical vision of Lent. Priests are not ready for a start in this direction, and the laity has now hardly a way to influence their clergy. The tendency is toward the massive, not the subtle; towards the visible, not the invisible; towards the secondary, not the primary, facts of redemption; towards gloom rather than triumph.

It may sound bold and highly critical if I say that the majority of us have not even now grasped St. Pius X's reforms in their implications. But the statement is, I think, true. For most of us these reforms amount to "more frequent and earlier" communions with the whole spirituality, the revolution of the spirit, left untouched.

The restoration of the Easter Vigil should revolutionize our whole attitude towards Lent at least, or rather towards the whole of life, but look what happens: in nine out of ten places the great vigil is even now not accepted and the fact that it remakes Lent is lost even in many places where it is done, as if only something that had slipped had been picked up and put in its right place.

Pius X lived in a complacent age and we do not. So things may move faster, but we should not forget that the losses of the Reformation left the Church with an outsized majority of static people and deprived her of natural forces which are now badly needed. To become operative, Grace is required not only in individuals but also in collectives like parishes and dioceses. And who says that what applies to integral parts does not apply to the whole body? As long as the average Catholic of our day is not disposed to accept St. Pius X's and Pius XII's vision of reform, no decrees and fond dreams of reformers —in the good sense of the word, not the rebellious— will have any effect.

When I disregard my own misgivings and proceed to put on paper an apparently esoteric vision of Lent, I do so compelled by the knowledge that it will help a few to find the Church's deeper grasp of Lent.

HOW our present Lent, as it is in the official books, came about is easier to understand when we remember that the whole development came to a halt before Charlemagne; in other words that it greatly changed and grew between about AD 250 and 750, but that for the last 1200 years it has been unaltered, kept, so to speak, in a deep-freeze. The result is that now we have two Lents, a beautiful "antique" and a rather shoddy-looking thing, our popular version. The word 'shoddy' is certainly an objectionable term for which I may be taken to task, but it is meant comparatively.

Before the first change the whole complex of redemption was liturgically celebrated in one service, the Great Night; there was no Palm Sunday, no Maundy Thursday nor Good Friday. In their sacramental worship Christians did not look back (in meditation and instruction they did, of course) but forward with a fixed gaze towards the second Coming.

We do not exactly know when the distribution of the different phases of Redemption started. The Feast of the Ascension, for example, was an established feast by A.D. 339; Epiphany and Christmas are a little older. Holy Week seems to be the result of the influx of pilgrims into the Holy Land and their subsequent interest in the memorable places and then, naturally, the memorable days. The short one-day fast grew gradually into its present length in the seventh century. At about the same time the three pre-Lenten Sundays were introduced. The primary purpose of the long fast with a daily afternoon Mass, except on Thursdays, was the preparation of the catechumens for Baptism; this purpose, not the Passion of Our Lord nor the annual penance of the already baptized, is what we notice in the choice of the texts.

The most helpful attitude an adult and mature Christian can adopt in order to benefit spiritually from the treasure heaped up in the missal is to take stock of what is there and what is not there. But note that this is no invitation to sabotage the "popular" parochial Lenten observances and to form esoteric conventicles of "the spiritual betters" as nuclei of resistance against hardworking pastors. The saints were people and did all the people did, but saw more and had richer resources. The pentitential element in Lent is as necessary as the rest of things.

TAKING stock of our supplies we find this: it all starts with Septuagesima Sunday and ends with Pentecost. Lent by itself is incomplete. Its climax is the Easter Vigil, naturally, in its conjunction with Good Friday and the following paschal tide (tide is a good word for the tidal wave of joy that it stands for). Except for the Friday Masses which contain hints and subtle allusions, the liturgy does not mention the

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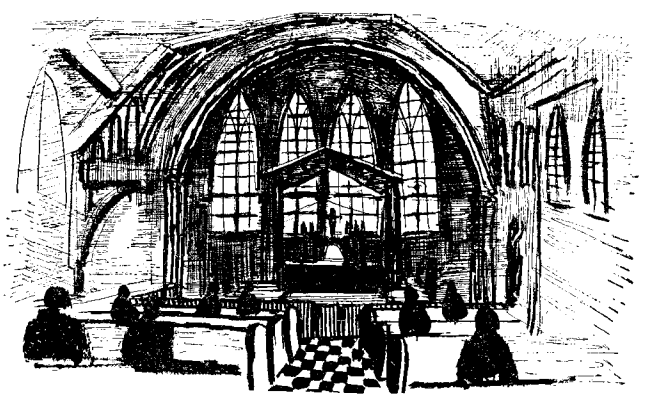
Passion until the Monday before Passion Sunday, when St. John's gospel takes over and presents the growing conflict between Jesus and His adversaries. This struggle becomes more and more explicit and reveals above all the mental and spiritual agony—*agonistrife*—of the Savior and draws us all into this crisis. There is progression and transition, as against the repetition and abruptness in our popular practices and customs. While there are traces of meddling and importation from the outside, even the existing missal texts show a sweep toward a climax that almost provides a musical pleasure, to step for a moment into the realm of aesthetics.

One factor easily forgotten is the fact that our missal is definitely the common book of sacraments of the city of Rome and was not originally composed for the Church universal. The whole Church is seen as an appendix of the city of Peter: the Masses are all assigned to definite church buildings in Rome and some of them are so parochial in their texts that a text was chosen to fit the mosaics in the apse of that church. This will delight some who love and know Rome and have an ultramontane bent; it will



annoy others who have a hard time in seeing consistency in the choice of texts. With a humble heart, all of us should be able to make an adjustment and, a good introduction in hand, gather spiritually in that church, called the "station church." The fare of scripture is so rich, the facets in which we "see Jesus" day after day so varying that we need not be upset by the localization of the texts.

A WORD of warning is needed. Even if we know this background, the propers of the Lenten Masses which season the unchanging fare of the ordinary are mutilated. The Introits have only one psalm verse and often not the significant one. There is only one third left of the offertory verse and often the amputation removed the heart. The Communion antiphon (*"communio"*) is a frame without a picture because the psalm is missing, and the psalm, to be sung congregationally while all receive Holy Communion, is very often what links Communion with the Gospel and the other parts of the Mass.

A good program for spiritual reading in this Lenten period would therefore be to read the missing parts on the eve of, or before, Mass, so that every Mass makes the full impact on the participant it originally was meant to make. As long as the reform of the missal is a fond hope—it has been one since St. Pius V and Benedict XIV, not to speak of St. Pius X—we have to do the best we can with what we have. The Austrians were more fortunate because Father Pius Parsch, of happy memory, actually printed complete and restored missals for Lent for the use of the laity back in the twenties. For years I have vainly tried to interest our own liturgists and publishers in a similar project. Once you have tried the rich repast, the sense of loss when you hold the truncated missal in your hands is so tremendous that you will never rest in prayer and effort until a remedy is provided.

Some people may think this is all most irregular. But see what happened: had there been no clamor in the crowd there would not have been Pius X's reforms. And, alas, the sketchy implementation of his decrees shows that the clamor was neither loud nor persistent enough. Look at some of the things our present Holy Father has done: evening Mass, vernacular rituals, the Easter Vigil, and a real hope of a popular form of the Mass kindled and maintained! These were things asked for, begged for, even after the first applicants were turned down and poorly instructed voices called "heresy and schism!"

TO return to the subject at hand, we must readjust our conception of Lent to get its true benefits. First we must see it is part of a whole. We must realize that we should take the hand of the Church to be led above the level of current substitutions. We must keep in mind that, in spite of mutilations, it is a carefully and artfully contrived entity with a direction and meaning. We must see that its meaning is positive, that its penitential aspects are means to an end and should make for a greater in-flowing of grace and a deeper conception of our redeemed estate. We must consciously see in Lent a rebirth, as is suggested by the original purpose of preparation for Baptism, now made very real through the Easter "duties" and the renewal of baptism *in voto* during the Sacred Night. We must also cultivate, and do so consciously, the spirit of the fifty days following the Sacred Night in which we learn to walk on this higher level of the "Eighth Day," in a new aion, eternity anticipated.

All Lent's auxiliary observances of penance and purification should ever be performed with a deep conviction that purification is God's work and all our works are His gifts, thus avoiding semi-Pelagian pride.

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Lent should be an annual "crisis," a rebirth in the spirit, and all the "athletics" of hardships we impose on ourselves are vain unless we also expose our minds and hearts to the Word and to the Sacrament. This is the meaning of the gentle sequence of the missal, its subtle timing, its steady urging and pleading.

Someone long ago remarked that this method is too diffuse for modern men and women, that it is better achieved by such means as truly Ignatian retreats, for example, or heart-piercing missions. Liturgical extremists, on the other hand, have belittled these means as too violent, as momentary flashes in the pan.

But surely we need not oppose one way to another. St. Ignatius was gentler because he distributed his "crisis" over thirty days, not three, and our three and ten-day retreats are really preparations for an annual stocktaking. As a sacramental Church, incarnational as she is, the Christian Church of Catholic tradition must regain in a body and in a common annual experience what she loses in apostolic salt in the frittering-away of everyday life. Modern man needs the sledge hammer blows to break the crust of secularism, but the gentle effort made "in the world" by parishes as a whole during Lent is as modern as a "secular institute."

I, for one, think with a great number of priests and laymen that the full wealth locked up in Latin and clerical ritualism must be unlocked and spread by a reform coming from the proper authorities, and I would fear for our youth's faith if halfway measures and grudging concessions, too little and too late, were the outcome of our clamor for bread. The record of what has been achieved, however, stands, and the present wave of pessimism is but a test of our courage, humility and patience. It is sad that a great deal of intellectual equipment is as yet needed to get a fuller experience of Lent. Yet the fact cannot be denied. But those who can do so, should; they should not be satisfied with substitutes. This can be done without loss either of humility or of a sense of community with those who are deprived of this wealth. To quote an inept example from another field: you may thoroughly savor Berlioz' *L'enfance du Christ* and yet be charmed by a simple Christmas carol.

The unsolved problem of our great liturgy, especially that of Lent-Pentecost, is a burden to be picked up by those who strive after a mature Christianity. Even though few of us will be given the gift of supernaturally founded elation at Easter, able to sing the Introits, Alleluias, Offertories and Communions—with their psalms!—in our hearts with no residium of unrealized, tardy sloth, all of us will gain a nearness to Christ's Mystical Body, a comprehension of salvation, an integration into the stream of pneumatic tradition which is rarely given by the substitution of the "Word and Sacramental mystery" (liturgy) and then more by a leap across them than by them.

The great theme is sounded on the first Sunday in Lent, after four days of preparation, in the Gospel of Christ's temptation. All through Lent the psalm of this Sunday, so closely joined to the Gospel, is repeated. Thus Lent is not routine; it is a time of decision, of ploughing the hard surface of habit, of seeding the Word into the furrows made by penance, of forming heart and mind according to the foreshadowing in the Old and the reality in the New Testament, woven into the superb pattern of the missal. The labor and penance, the renunciation of the alluring evil, striven after with more or less energy and success, will become a deep religious experience in its full sense only if we follow the Church in her liturgy—because Word and Sacrament are the only immediately given means of salvation for those who aspire to Faith and Love.

SONNETS FOR LENT

"Beware of prowling dogs"—St. Paul

TO think of Troy now Lent is down, aware
of prowling dogs, our conscionable past,
is to begin a race ourselves impair
by how precipitate the joy we fast
equally on till our appeasement leap
like Tiber's miles within the frugal rock.
These are the fields the dead apostles reap.
What ages fallen to the gospels clock
how long our will renews the loss we are
before the season we are riven by
alone as Chryses? . . . Danaans at war
saw women walk upon fire-walling sky
at each with reason, and Cassandra wept
before the house that Agamemnon kept.

WE have gone down like Christ, repeating him
late in the confluence of vows. Our flesh
sees Troy in ruins, laughing Hector, limb
by cautionary limb, strewn where—to thresh
the fields of Priam—plovers walk. We wake
and sleep where Sinon-Judas prays and fasts
conformable as love, were love opaque,
rescuing us this city honor casts
deceptive death upon: the Way escheat
is where like hollow loss at the sea's hem
lie arms and men, blind as the ships that beat
oars, hoar Poseidon, Greek fires to presage them.
The grain the plovers walk upon is dead
quickening what our wars inherited.

CAROL JOHNSON.

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As Mr. Wingright Sees It

YOU may find the following interview as confusing as I did, but remember that it represents the working opinions not only of my friend Mr. Wingright but of a hardy band who read the same papers Mr. Wingright subscribes to, write the same kind of letters-to-the-editor and belong to the same organizations.

Interviewer: Mr. Wingright, do you think we are winning the cold war?

Wingright: No. There is altogether too much appeasement abroad; we aren't tough enough. We're satisfied with mere containment when we ought to take the initiative and provide the free world with dynamic leadership.

Interviewer: How can we put an end to appeasement?

Wingright: Stop spending all this money for armies, navies and air forces. Cut way down on taxes and bring our boys back home where they belong. Americans have no business in the outlandish places where they've been sent.

Interviewer: Do you think the Russians would hesitate to drop a hydrogen bomb on New York or Chicago?

Wingright: They wouldn't hesitate for a minute. The only thing that holds them back is that they're afraid they'd get the same thing in return. They're totally unscrupulous. That's why I say we ought to beat them to the punch.

Interviewer: Are you in favor of a preventive war?

Wingright: I am against all foreign wars. War should be abolished. What did our wars ever get us? Did we save the world for democracy as Wilson said we would? We licked Hitler and what did we get—Stalin! Now the do-gooders want us to save the rest of the world from Communism. Will they never learn?

Interviewer: You are for coexistence, then?

Wingright: I am absolutely opposed to coexistence. Coexistence means we should stand by and let China and Russia swallow up the rest of the world.

Interviewer: We can't permit that. What should we do?

Wingright: Stop spending all this money for armies, navies and air forces. Cut way down on taxes and bring our boys home where they belong.

Interviewer: Do you think that we can even contain Communism if we withdraw from our overseas bases, cut down on military expenditures and break up the alliances we've made?

Wingright: I told you, I am against mere containment. I'm for liberation. Besides, George Washington warned us against foreign entanglements. But the bleeding hearts and the fellow travelers in this country want us to send our boys all over the world to hold off Communism. I don't say these internationalists are actually Communists but I do say they're soft on Communism. They talk about containment. Don't they know you can't contain Communism—you've got to fight it? I say let's not be satisfied with mere containment. Let's think about liberation. Let's bring our boys back home, stop fighting wars all over the world, stop thinking we can win friends by spending money, and liberate the millions behind the Iron Curtain.

Interviewer: I take it that you don't think very highly of our allies?

Wingright: I remember what George Washington said about entangling alliances. We ought to break up this so-called partnership and go out on our own, back where we belong, so we can provide the free world with dynamic leadership.

Interviewer: You oppose the foreign-aid program?

Wingright: You can't win friends with money. Everybody knows that. We have to cut down on all this spending that the bleeding hearts are so anxious for. Not until we do will we be able to count on people seeing through the Communist propagandists with their false promises. We have the richest country on earth and the highest living standard ever known to man. With all this giveaway we're on the verge of bankruptcy. That's a fine situation for the richest country on earth with the highest living standard ever known to man, to be in, isn't it? I say stop all this giveaway so we'll have friends who are economically strong and ready to stand up to the Communists. You can't win friends with money, that's for sure. I have no patience with the bleeding hearts who want to build up the economies of other countries. They're soft on Communism and you'll never liberate the world from Communism until you're ready to make sacrifices. Let's put our shoulders to the wheel, pull in our belts, be ready to make sacrifices, and stop all this giveaway.

Interviewer: Are you satisfied with things at home?

Wingright: We have the finest country in the world, and our system of government has it all over everybody else's. For the last twenty or twenty-two years the government has been riddled with traitors, but I put my trust in the people. Left to themselves they will always choose the right course. Twenty-three years ago they elected a charlatan and a scoundrel and re-elected him three more times. Then they elected a Machiavellian simpleton from Missouri, after they already had three years of experience with him. They followed that up by electing a pseudo-Republican who has betrayed everything the party stands for. He's the fellow currently leading us down the road to disaster. I say leave it to the people. In the past forty years they've supported three unnecessary wars and persisted in electing one man after another who has brought us nearer, ever nearer, to the brink of disaster. The American people must show the rest of the world how to live. The world's only hope is the U. S. and the system of government we have here. Our history proves that.

JOHN COGLEY.

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THE SCREEN

COME, JOSEPHINE, IN MY FLYING MACHINE

NO doubt the movies have come a long way since they started out as flickers some fifty years ago, and the ultimate was reached in September of 1952 when Cinerama appeared for the first time and thrilled its audiences with the illusion of depth as they "participated" in rides in planes, gondolas, water skiis and roller coasters. Moviegoers expecting the ultimate ultimate in the new Cinerama presentation, which has opened in New York and will eventually turn up in the other eighteen theaters having the elaborate Cinerama equipment, are likely to be disappointed. The second Cinerama production, called "Cinerama Holiday," is more of same—a handsomely made travelogue photographed by three cameras that operate as one, and projected from three booths onto a curved screen which gives the illusion of third dimension because of the curve and our own eyes' periphery vision. This illusion is aided by sound boxes throughout the theater which make the music or noises or screaming or whatever blast out from all around. Technically Cinerama has been improved and the Technicolor photography is often quite beautiful.

"Cinerama Holiday" has a suggestion, but only a suggestion, of a story: while a young married couple from Switzerland visit the United States, an American couple tour Switzerland and Paris. I don't think Producers Stanley Warner and Louis deRochemont intended to slight their home country, but it happens that the American couple abroad sees the more impressive sights. The Swiss couple enjoys some imposing views of the West and some excitingly lovely shots of New England in the autumn. In the meantime the Americans are thrilled by the wonders of Switzerland from bob-sled, ski plane, and skate. Cinerama is at its best in the outdoors; and this becomes quite evident when the cameras take us to Paris. The vistas of the city make us sit up and take notice, and so does the handsome sequence of High Mass at Notre Dame Cathedral, but the visits to a French night club with a very mediocre show or to the Opera for an indifferent ballet are a waste of Cinerama's possibilities. Just in case the Swiss ride on a bob-sled didn't give you enough thrills, "Cinerama Holiday" ends on a high note by taking you on what is no doubt your first ride in a jet plane. And the finale, appropriately enough, is a burst of fireworks.

JUST in case you can't go on a Cinerama holiday, but have a yen for travel, you might accompany Gregory Peck on a forty-mile hike through the sweltering jungles of Burma. I can't remember when I have seen such a long trek done with such relentless realism as Director Robert Parrish treats us to in "The Purple Plain." You will probably be as exhausted as I was at the end of this picture, but you will agree that Eric Ambler's screenplay, which stems from a novel by H. E. Bates, does what it sets out to do: prove that a man with a will to live can overcome all obstacles. As the film opens in 1945, Peck, a squadron leader with the RAF in Burma, is embittered about his wife's death and is giving vent to his frayed nerves in reckless bravery as a pilot. His attitude toward life changes, however, when he falls in love with a most attractive Burmese girl (Win Min Than); and later when his plane is downed behind enemy lines, he is determined to return to her. "The Purple Plain" was beautifully photographed in Technicolor in Ceylon, and although it is too long and makes the audience suffer as it trudges those forty miles, it is an outstanding example of a well-made and thoughtful movie.

THE same cannot be said about "The Far Country," which takes us up to Alaska. This movie, too, is about a man (James Stewart) who is reckless in his bravery; but he is only interested in himself, and not until quite late in the story after his best friend (Walter Brennan) has been killed and the villains are pushing around the decent townsfolk and gold prospectors does Jimmy join the fight on the side of the good guys. Director Anthony Mann has substituted action for thought in his picture, but at times the action is almost meaningless. To add to the suspense, Jimmy vacillates between Ruth Roman and Corinne Calvet; his interest, however is not very wholehearted, so neither you nor he care which girl he gets.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

THE STAGE

THE EMPIRE OF SENTIMENT

"ANASTASIA," by Guy Bolton out of Marcelle Maurette's French original, is a relic of the romantic theater, with its velvety ambiance of *déclassé* European royalty, its lustrous fantasies of blue-blooded renunciation and the splendors and miseries of the nobly-born. Here, in the Fourth Empire of sentiment, all is upholstery, but happily Mr. Bolton and Mme. Maurette are artists of the meretricious, their needlework crude but strong, their opulent plush marvelously displayed for effect. Around a hard structure of fact—the legend of the Grand

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Duchess Anastasia and her reputed survival of the massacre of the Russian royal family—they have spun a fiction at once robust and tender, the coloring bold but unexpectedly shaded into most delicate nuances of feeling. In the foreground, the braggadocio and swagger of romance: behind it, an idyll of domestic pieties swept ruthlessly before the dry and withering wind of time.

Mr. Alan Schneider, the director, has shrewdly styled the play for this essential sables-and-diamonds effect; the pitch is exact—each note reverberating with a vibrant though ever-so-slightly-hollow richness of tone. And the performances echo that intention. Joseph Anthony, for example, as the crystallization of every elegant cad who ever inhabited a pan-Slavic memoir, plays with audacity and a genuine feeling for the grand manner. But it is Eugenie Leontovich and Viveca Lindfors who animate the magnificent dramatic centerpiece of "Anastasia:" a classic scene of recognition, so rich in dominating intensities of feeling, ranging with such assured mastery over a spectrum of emotion, and raised by these two actresses to so elevated a point of expressive power, that it distinguishes immeasurably both the experience of a season, and the rather florid dramatic museum in which the scene itself is hung. (*At the Lyceum.*)

N.B. I must defer until next week a discussion of James Merrill's play, "The Immortal Husband," which has just opened at the Theater de Lys, but for the moment shall urge attendance at an occasion of much significant wit and truth and pleasure, certainly the most provocative evening the New York theater is currently offering.

RICHARD HAYES.

COMMUNICATIONS

CHRISTIAN CULTURE

Santa Clara, Cal.

TO the Editors: A violent attack on the memory and reputation of Hilaire Belloc and Gilbert Keith Chesterton appeared in Mr. Charles Stinson's letter printed in The Commonweal of February 4. . . . I confess a certain reluctance in answering this letter. Were it simply an attack on some contemporary who espouses the ideals of these giants of the revival of Catholic courage, I would dismiss it as unworthy of comment. Since, however, it is an attack on the very names of Belloc and Chesterton, as well as on their long and chivalrous defense of the sacred inheritance of our common civilization, I feel it must be taken up. . . .

There are those of us who feel that the Catholics of our generation owe a profound debt of gratitude for the valiant charge against the barbarians waged by Chesterton and Belloc in the years before our birth. . . . But I shall not here detail this debt of gratitude we owe these great men. Lest I bore or unduly amuse those who find this point of view sentimentally conservative, permit me, in the words of Belloc, "to cut the cackle and come to the horses."

Mr. Stinson, in his letter, objects to organizing the university around the study of Christian Culture, as proposed by Mr. Christopher Dawson. Mr. Stinson objects to Mr. Dawson, but he grants—condescending to this great man—that he is somewhat more "progressive" than his predecessors. In this connection Mr. Stinson speaks of the "Christendom error." It is difficult to know what he really means by this. There were theories *about* Christendom: the theories of the Guelfs and the Ghibellines, the theory of Arnold of Brescia, that of the boy emperor Otto III, and finally that of the Emperor Charles IV and of Erasmus and many others. But Christen*dom* itself was never a theory: it was a fact. It was a fact of the common unity of the civilized world under Faith in Christ, a civilization wherein Greek Wisdom, Roman Law, and Jewish Monotheism were transfigured and bathed in the fires of Faith. From this one Thing has come all our freedoms.

We think as Westerners because we think as Christians. As Karl Adam once put it: "As the historical Jesus bore the shape of a son of David, so the form of the Mystical Christ is Western." And as I have written elsewhere, our civilization has taught us that "political freedom is linked inexorably with economic freedom; that power—both political and economic—should be rooted, so far as possible, in the human person; that a decent society admits of the widespread distribution of property; that personal and social peace necessitates a living continuity of the present with the past;" she has taught us "the supremacy of the spiritual over the temporal, the ethical over the economic, and the economic over the technical: the enchantment of reality." This is the Christendom whose grandeur so crushed Dante that he wrote: *"Ergo scindere imperium imperatori non licet."* This is Christendom, rent and split as she is.

That Mr. Stinson should imagine, therefore, that a student of Christian Culture is one who busies himself with "Byzantine ikons" and "Baroque ecclesiastical architecture" is incomprehensible. From the former, Mr. Stinson could learn something about the Transcendence and the Terrible Majesty of God; from the latter, something about the Lord Who plays through history, "delighting in the children of men." But that he should imagine such preoccupations—important though they be—to be of the essence of the study of

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Christian Culture, is not only incomprehensible: it is shocking.

But beyond his apparent blindness before the majesty of our own past, beyond his attack on the two greatest English Catholic writers of this century, there remains Mr. Stinson's personal program for the reformation of our American Catholic Colleges. And here we have a profound text for the student of irony:

(1) Mr. Stinson asks for a curriculum which meets "their" (*sic*) standards of intellectual and technical research. But why should we meet *their* standards? *They* excel us in technical research for only two reasons, reasons known to anyone with a modicum of common sense: (a) *they* have the money and we have not; (b) *they* believe the millenium can be achieved by technical progress: we know better.

(2) He asks that we meet *them* more often for what is usually called an "exchange of ideas." This is a decent goal. However, it has been my experience that secular educators (and I meet them often) respect us when they realize we have something unique of our own to offer the community of learning. I have seen a good dozen educators come into the Church within the past few years: not one of them was attracted to the Faith because of what it had in common with secular intellectual ideals; they "came over to Rome" (if I may use that old-fashioned phrase) because Rome had something utterly unique, cutting it away—irrevocably—from the scientistic and semantic swamp they desperately yearned to escape. Mr. Stinson complains that we more conservative Catholics have a "ghetto" complex. He even calls us *bien pensants*: a term, ironically enough, popularized by a French Royalist, George Bernanos, who feared his fellow French Catholics were selling out to a secularized world. It seems to me that Mr. Stinson's own deep sense of inferiority before our non-Catholic institutions of learning fulfills, classically, the essense of a "ghetto" mentality. He asks us to come before our peers: caps in hand. What a preposterous attitude for the heirs to all Christendom!

(3) He asks us to cease working toward a "Catholic sociology" and, presumably, toward a Catholic political science, a Catholic literary criticism, etc. In his own words: "A Catholic philosophy was enough. But this is worse." It is too bad Mr. Stinson feels burdened by "Catholic philosophy." If he looked into it, he would learn to distinguish. The physical sciences, in our day largely mathematical in character, deal with symbolic constructs that are used for mastering nature: whether these symbolic constructs actually conform with things as they are is relatively beside the point to modern scientists. For this reason, these sciences only remotely touch the theological and the metaphysical. But sociology, political science, literature, the fine arts, history (the core of the curriculum in my opinion)—all these deal with the real order, with things as they actually exist. Therefore they are related to the order of Creation and Redemption—the order of existence—as it comes forth from the Hands of the Creator, as it is held in being by His Love, as it is Redeemed by His Son, as it returns to Him as to its source. There is no such thing as a "pure" sociology, a "pure" political science, a "pure" poetry. These are nothing but abstractions: the "pure" means purified of existence, purged of reality. *In being,* these partial and perfectly valid visions of the truth must be penetrated by the love and the grace of God: they cannot be understood apart from Him. . . .

(4) Mr. Stinson asks, finally, that "we study Dogma more profoundly." Here, like the man who was against sin, I find myself in agreement with him. And since Mr. Stinson is so interested in the theology of history (which is the theology of the Providence of God: about which, as St. Paul says, no man can presume to certain knowledge), perhaps we might begin by meditating on the meaning of the words of Pope Pius X: "Civilization has no longer to be discovered nor the new City to be built in the clouds. It has existed and it exists; it is the Christian civilization—the Catholic City." Or, in the words of Hilaire Belloc: "They say that nations perish and that at last the race itself shall decline; it is better for us of the faith to believe that you [*i.e.* Christendom] are preserved and that your preservation is the standing grace of this world."

FREDERICK D. WILHELMSEN.

Philadelphia, Penna.

TO the Editors: On one point at least the criticisms of Christian Culture offered by Joseph McMahon [Jan. 7] and Charles Stinson [Feb. 4] seem to cancel each other out. Mr. McMahon is critical of Mr. Dawson for being too aware of the cultural crisis of our time and for devising his educational program as a means of meeting that crisis; while Mr. Stinson feels that it is this very crisis of Western culture that renders any study of the Christian past mere antiquarianism. Both seem to agree, however, in jettisoning the Christian cultural heritage in order to make a completely fresh start.

Mr. Dawson's own view is that it is precisely the danger in which Western civilization now finds itself that makes the study of Christian culture most urgent. The decline of Europe must not be allowed to mean the decline of Christianity; but it is only by assuming our responsibility for the transmission of Christian culture to non-European peoples that this catastrophe can be avoided. Mr. Dawson put this point most clearly in a recent review:

"The study of the later Roman Empire can throw

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more light than we realize on the problems of our own age, which is also an age of transition when the frontiers between East and West are shifting and a new world is painfully emerging from the ruins of the old.

"From this point of view the ages of transition are exceptionally important, for it is in them that we see the vital changes taking place which determine the path which civilization will follow for centuries to come. Now if we compare our own culture with that of the Roman-Hellenistic world, in its later stages, it seems to me that what is most significant is not what happens in Europe itself but the changes that take place in the outer zone of Western expansion. For the inheritance of Europe is not confined to Europe any more than the inheritance of the Roman Empire was limited to the Mediterranean. Even though the world hegemony of Europe has passed, America and Asia still inherit the tradition of European culture, just as Northern Europe and the Middle East inherited the tradition of Hellenistic Roman culture after the Empire had fallen.

"At the present moment it seems unlikely that modern Europe is capable of handing on its Christian inheritance to the new peoples as the Roman world handed it on to the barbarians, but we must remember that such a development would have seemed just as unlikely to a Roman in the third century.

"It is now the fashion to view the relations of East and West in terms of colonial exploitation or of nationalist reaction, and if this were all, the European inheritance could be written off like the oil concessions and capital investments which are being expropriated. But the permanent inheritance of Europe, like that of Hellenism, is a spiritual and intellectual one. It has changed the world because it has changed men's minds. Loss of power does not necessarily involve loss of knowledge, and even though Europe may cease to be a center of world power the spiritual and intellectual forces which had their origin in Europe will continue to influence the world, whether the new masters of the world acknowledge their debts or not. The influence of Hellenism did not end with the Roman conquest of Greece, nor yet with the fall of Rome or the fall of the Byzantine Empire, and so it must be with the inheritance of Europe."

J. J. MULLOY.

E. E. CUMMINGS

Ithaca, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Mr. John Logan begins his recent letter on E. E. Cummings [January 14] with the question: "Is there any serious argument against considering E. E. Cummings one of the half-dozen finest poets alive in this country of 160,000,000 people?" To this question, for which he assumes a negative answer (save for Blackmur's "essay of twenty years ago"), I must asseverate a firm *yes*. (I assume no special implications in the use of the term *serious*, and I suspect no concealed dialectic gimmicks in the playing of half-dozen against 160 million.)

While there may be other arguments of which I am ignorant, these I do know: those of Yvor Winters, Allen Tate, Victor Hamm, and Louise Bogan. That of Winters (1937), while not extended, was serious, and did distinctly judge and relegate to a distinctly minor position (speaking of *pseudo-experimental* poetry, the work of poets who confuse tradition with convention, and abandoning convention, lead to the abandonment of form and of poetry): "Mr. E. E. Cummings is a good example of this type of poet. When Mr. Cummings ceases to experiment, and essays the traditional, he becomes painfully literary. Either way he shows little

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comprehension of poetry." Then there is Tate's criticism in *Reactionary Essays*—but that too appeared (in book form) nearly twenty years ago—(1936). Victor Hamm's *en passant* evaluation in his recent *Pattern of Criticism* (1951), while ambiguous—"the more *recherché* inditings of E. E. Cummings and Eugene O'Neill"—scarcely strikes one as an unqualified and unquestioning acceptance of Cummings as "one of the half dozen finest." Of Miss Bogan's less than adulatory judgment I shall say more in a few moments.

Let us then throw away the stage prop of appeal to authority: it is only an illusory substitute for criticism and at best a prop for the critical act. And this prop doesn't belong in the act, inasmuch as Mr. Logan himself berates Michael Harrington's "pale appeal to the much-thumbed orthodoxies of the Eliot criticism"—but that at least was an appeal to something actual, not an appeal to a ghost of authority.

Having answered Mr. Logan's rhetorical question, let us look more closely at the Blackmur essay of twenty years ago "which did not, of course, treat anything beyond Cummings' earliest work." Such a statement ignores the footnote in the 1952 reprint of that essay in *Language as Gesture* which points out that the essay was written in 1930 and adds: "There would seem little modification of these notes necessary because of *Eimi* or the subsequent volumes of verse": one may take the 1930 essay, then, as sitting in judgment on and at least partially descriptive of Cummings' later work. And though Mr. Logan writes that "it is the *language* that is the point," the rest of Mr. Logan's letter totally ignores Blackmur's essay itself. It is precisely at the level of the Cummings language that Blackmur works on the poetry, and he displays the use of language by Cummings as trying to thrill without full consciousness, as the gasp of the little girl on the roller coaster. Such an art as Cummings', Blackmur concludes, "when it pretends to measure life is essentially vicarious; it is a substitute for something that never was—like a tin soldier, or Peter Pan. It has all the flourish of life and every sentimental sincerity. Taken for what it is, it is charming and even instructive. Taken solemnly, as it is meant to be, the distortion by which it exists is too much for it, and it seems a kind of babytalk."

The evaluative description of Cummings in Louise Bogan's excellent little survey, *Achievement in American Poetry, 1900-1950* (1951) seems to me accurate and more than fair to the actuality of his achievement: "Cummings' insistence, over a period of twenty-five years, on his youthful typographical oddities tended, as time went on, to become tiresome; and his failure to mature, emotionally and intellectually, finally introduced a note of peevishness into his work as a whole. The fact that he never swerved from a latent adolescent idealism, added to the fact of his permanent belief in certain simple (in the best sense) virtues, kept his work, for all its increasing bad temper and skittishness, basically serious and important."

Let us not inflate beyond recognition the smallness of Cummings' output of a very few charming lyrics when he was not playing the tin soldier on a roller coaster.

R. J. SCHOECK.

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TO the Editors: We are preparing a study on Communism and the churches. Material from all parts of the country on this subject would be useful and welcome. Persons with information on any of the following three topics are invited to communicate with us at Union Theological Seminary, 3041 Broadway, New York 27, N. Y.: (1) Documented evidence of actual Communist attempts to infiltrate the churches or make use of clergymen—Protestant, Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, or Jewish. (2) Examples of false and irresponsible charges of Communist influence on religion in America. (3) General data on the Social Gospel as it relates to either or both of these topics.

RALPH LORD ROY,
PAUL A. CARTER.

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The Modern Writer's Quarrel with His Culture

THE OPPOSING SELF: Nine Essays in Criticism. By Lionel Trilling. Viking. $3.50.

By VIVIAN MERCIER

PROFESSOR Trilling's latest volume consists mainly of introductions to books, and deals with nine writers who exemplify "the modern imagination. . . . of selves conceived in opposition to the general culture." On the jacket we find this subtitle: "The Romantic image of the Self in Keats, Jane Austen, Wordsworth, Tolstoi, Dickens, Flaubert, Howells, Henry James, Orwell"; almost nowhere in the book, however, does Mr. Trilling even *imply* that another, non-Romantic, image of the self is to be found in modern literature, one which acknowledges that without "the general culture"—or at any rate without some specific culture—the self would be unable to exist at all.

The Opposing Self first puzzled and then startled me; I had been reading it for some time before I reached the alarming conclusion that Mr. Trilling's quarrel with culture began before he had ever really possessed a culture. This sounds a fantastic thing to say about a man of his eminence as a scholar, critic and teacher, but no other hypothesis seems to explain the agony with which he arrives at his platitudinous views about Keats, Wordsworth and George Orwell. These are in no sense views acquired at second hand, though probably millions of people have held them before Mr. Trilling. Nor are they unsound views. But Mr. Trilling has to massacre an army of straw men and to divest himself of a number of laboriously acquired prejudices before he can understand what Keats means by "negative capability," or Wordsworth by "a wise passiveness," or before he solemnly agrees with a student's "odd statement" that George Orwell "was a virtuous man."

On his own admission in the Wordsworth essay, Mr. Trilling abandoned Judaism before he properly understood it; since he was not a Christian, one could hardly complain if he has no particular taste for Christian ethics; what baffles me is that he became a leading specialist in nineteenth-century English literature without having any real understanding of either the Christian tradition in that century or the Stoic tradition which Newman showed to be the ethical core of the nineteenth-century English gentleman. Otherwise, how could Mr. Trilling write that "it shocks us and dismays us when Orwell speaks in praise of such things as responsibility, and orderliness in the personal life, and fair play, and physical courage. . . ."?

On the other hand, in his really brilliant essay on Jane Austen, Mr. Trilling never succeeds in discovering the obvious at all. Although he happens to mention "the Stoic doctrine of *apatheia*" in the essay, he appears to think that *Mansfield Park* is a Christian novel; perhaps, indeed, it *is* more Christian than Jane Austen's other novels, but the basic faith underlying all her books, it seems to me, is that of a Stoicism tempered by respect for money and power. Yet nothing could be more vivid than Mr. Trilling's demonstration of Jane Austen's concern with achieving sincerity, avoiding vulgarity, and "belonging to the number of the secular-spiritual elect." It does not seem to occur to him that she believed herself to be thus asserting the ideals of the culture, not those of the self—the obvious point that anyone brought up in her tradition would make.

I suppose that on the frequent occasions when Mr. Trilling says "we" or "in our time" he *is* speaking for others besides himself, perhaps for the majority of the readers of the *Partisan Review,* who no doubt *do* have those feelings of "alienation" which *PR* is forever writing about. I could wish, however, that Mr. Trilling, *PR,* and their imitators would declare a ten-year moratorium on the expressions "in our time" and "alienation." Keat's description of his friend Dilke, who lacks negative capability, would fit more than one of the *PR* group: he is "a man who cannot feel that he has a personal identity until he has made up his mind about everything."

Some of the time Mr. Trilling can be ironical at the expense of his own group. Take this from the Orwell essay:

> The characteristic error of the middle-class intellectual of modern times is his tendency to abstractness and absoluteness, his reluctance to connect idea with fact, especially with personal fact. . . . the prototypical act of the modern intellectual is his abstracting himself from the life of the family . . . intellectuality . . . permits us to escape the cosmic ridicule which in our youth we suppose is inevitably directed at those who take seriously the small concerns of the material quotidian world, which we know to be inadequate and doomed by the very fact that it is so absurdly *conditioned*—by things, habits, local and temporary customs, and the foolish errors and solemn absurdities of the men of the past.

Yes, I used to feel like that too until I had committed, with the best possible guidance from Freud *et al.,* some wonderfully foolish errors. I wonder, though, just how ironically Mr. Trilling writes of "the moral or spiritual prestige which is the most valuable thing in the world to those of us who think a little." Secular self-righteousness is perhaps the worst kind—and the most insidious.

For all his irony, Mr. Trilling exemplifies the subtlest danger besetting a great teacher, which is, paradoxically, not that he will fall behind the times, but that he will try to keep ahead of them. We are reminded of this danger by an anecdote in the Howells article: "I received the first anonymous letter I have ever had from a student—it warned me that the lapse of taste shown by my excessive

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interest in a dull writer was causing a scandal in the cafeterias."

One wonders whether Mr. Trilling dropped Howells like a hot potato after that friendly warning. When our students possess no culture worthy of the name, we must insist that they get one before rebelling against it, even if "getting culture" actually involves reading dull writers. Having been as much a fugitive from my own cultural background as Mr. Trilling was from his, I must insist that the cure for such a cultural hangover is a hair of the dog that bit us—a better, fuller understanding of the culture which ultimately gave us all the values we now cherish.

Medieval Family

THE CORNERSTONE. By Zoe Oldenbourg. Pantheon. $4.50.

By PHILIP BURNHAM

AS almost always happens with historical novels, the author of *The Cornerstone* takes the liberty of "chronicling" a number of different lives with only vague regard for a focused story or for consistently developed character. Too typically, also, she allows herself a terrible prose style. It would seem to offend the eye, ear and taste of almost any school of writing from the deepest medieval to the most futuristic *avant-gard,* except, apparently, for the hardy and specialized fraternity of the historical novel.

The main story of *The Cornerstone* carries three generations of a moderately powerful family in thirteenth century Champagne over a crisis lasting several years. In the middle is Herbert, the rough lord of Linnières: a middle-aged son and father, and an unamusing type of Jeeter Lester addicted to more serious violences. His tale is a kind of medieval Tobacco Road in archaic and expensive costume. Grandfather's story of pilgrimage afoot to the Holy Land echoes a tinsel, if not the Golden, legend of more primitive saints. The author is not very demanding about the old Haguenier's motives and arguments, but the power of his simplified faith and the ruggedness of his self-abandonment produce, after he leaves home and family and property, a welcome counterweight to the egoism and evil left behind with his son, Herbert, in the unwholesome manor of Linnières.

Young Haguenier, son of the wicked Herbert and grandson of the atoning pilgrim, provides the third and most important story of the chronicle. He is a very bewildering character and his tale is told confusingly. From his first appearance, returning home from schooling in the court of a Norman count, the author writes about him and describes him in contradictory fashion, ascribing to him traits of character, temperament, language and belief, and even looks, which contradict and exclude each other. The reader's impression of the protagonist must be either careless or desperate.

The young Haguenier's story is told more than half in an elaborate "romance of courtly love." The author converts a form of fictional, poetic allegory into an unconvincing and at length rather boring realistic chronicle. How much symbolism and allegory she intends to retain is not clear, but enough, at least, to provide an esoteric overtone. Haguenier's story goes in and out of stylized romance and "earthy realism" as it advances toward its religious solution.

Zoë Oldenbourg won an important French prize with this book, and in this country she hit the Book-of-the-Month Club jackpot with it. Pantheon, an excellent publisher, sponsors it. (This, incidentally, makes one feel confident that the style is not simply a failure in translation and editing.) Some good reviewers have reviewed it favorably. Although one considers its failings in idea, characterization, artistic clarity and unity, and in taste, to be serious, there is undoubtedly a cumulative vitality and attraction to the work.

The energy expended in writing a 482-page novel almost has to result in something creative; and following characters as far and energetically as Miss Oldenbourg does, eventually does get the reader somewhere. There is a partial recreation of a past age of great inherent interest. This recreation follows a convention which is currently widely acceptable. (As the dust jacket blurb puts it: "The cruelties and horrors of religious warfare ravage the cities and countryside, and alongside faith stand superstition and belief in witchcraft. But throughout the book runs

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the motive of spiritual man. . . .") The rather crude convention of "the Age of Faith" involved may still seem in great part a cliché, but *The Cornerstone* gives it considerable content and meaning, although little enough glamor. And Miss Oldenbourg's novel does push an attentive reader, however inelegantly, to examine his own faith and to consider the failures and offenses and the possibilities of his own love, which are magnified almost to burlesque by the three generations of the lords of the manor of Linnières.

God's Existence

APPROACHES TO GOD. By Jacques Maritain. Translated by Peter O'Reilly. Harper. $2.50.

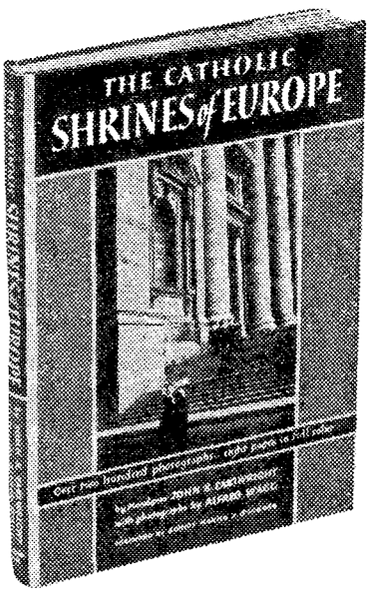
By LEO R. WARD

IN his brief and wonderful *Confession de foi,* Jacques Maritain has said that he tried personally the state of mind of the idealist freethinker, of the inexperienced convert, and of the Christian who, as his faith is more and more rooted, becomes aware of the purifications to which that faith must be subjected. He said he was able to get also some first-hand experimental idea of what the anti-religious camp and the halfway, agnostic camp are worth. In these central matters, he had a radical schooling. He learnt at the same time what Bergson was worth. With his brief for spirituality, and intuition, and the real value of the metaphysical, he was worth vastly more than the others.

On the question of how we approach God, Maritain had immense things to learn. And evidently he has learnt the main approaches, by first studying them with reverence, and then by reconsidering them and meditating on them for over forty years. He has thought them over and over again, in the light of what Kant has said of them, in the light of how we know, in the light of necessary causation in the universe, of a possible matter-energy constant, and of a perhaps not inconceivable infinity of time and process.

All this means, on the positive side, going repeatedly to the core of the whole question. M. Maritain finds this positive core in St. Thomas' five approaches or "ways" to demonstrate the existence of God. It seems to me fortunate for the human family, at least in the Occident, that one of the most remarkable minds of this century should, after it has composed a logic, and elaborated a theory of knowledge and a metaphysics and a philosophy of nature and a practical philosophy of society and morals and art, return to meditation on the "ways" to knowing God on the philosophical level.

The "ways" are put down with simplicity, but with awareness of where man now is in the existential



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situation—which is in many senses other than it was when they were put down by St. Thomas. M. Maritain is quite aware of what Hume and Kant, for example, have said. He remarks in a footnote that, since each of the "ways" begins with a fact of experience, this empiric base could be greatly broadened. And of course for some men of good will this broader base is needed, if the proofs are to make sense to them. That is, change and causing and uniformity in nature are so obvious that it is difficult for some persons to do more than accept them as if the world in which they are involved was self-subsistent.

With great fidelity to the originals, M. Maritain has set the famous "ways" down again for us. What is more striking is the prephilosophic way he uses at the outset. This, which is not an "argument" or a demonstration, is in the back of every man's mind. To be men, says the author, we have first of all an intuition of being in things around us, then of our own being, and then, even if ever so vaguely, an intuition that, granting the fragile and menaced character of our own existence, there is "some absolute, irrefragable existence. . . . Being-without-nothingness, that is, self-subsistent Being."

Though much of the matter in *Approaches to God* is difficult, the translation, by Peter O'Reilly, reads extremely well. This small volume is the first in Harper's series "World Perspectives," planned and edited by Ruth Nanda Anshen, and it is a remarkably strong start.

Royal Paranoia

THE MAD MONARCH. By Werner Richter. Regnery. $5.

By ROBERT HOLZHAUER

WHEN, in 1886, King Ludwig II of Bavaria murdered the psychiatrist who had declared him insane, the murder appeared as an act not without honor to many of his subjects. Somewhat surprisingly, in the light of present-day psychiatric knowledge, the author of *The Mad Monarch* seems to concur in their opinion. Taken without irony, however, the truth of Mr. Richter's title can barely have escaped him. Certainly it does not elude the reader, although he may be confused by the ambiguous manner in which Ludwig's case history is interpreted.

Mr. Richter tends to pose Ludwig II as a good, noble, and misunderstood man with a parcel of engaging eccentricities. But the facts which he perforce includes tell a different story of a deranged personality whose behavior has earned continued attention in literature, psychiatric journals, and Sunday supplements devoted to the notorious and the shocking.

Handsome and withdrawn as a young man, Ludwig grew to a fat maturity, luxuriating in his own elaborate coiffures, his costume games in jewels and dresses, and his preferential company of stableboys, men servants and soldiers on the palace staff. He was possessed

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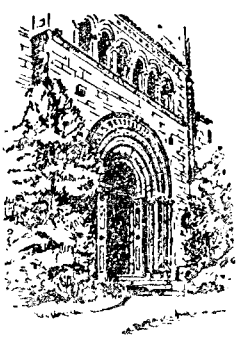

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by the music of Wagner, and his personal devotion to the composer led him to establish the Bayreuth Festivals, the great modern example of artistic patronage. Wrapped in fantasy, he suffered what Mr. Richter with inaccurate terminology calls "an allergy against Munich," and refused to appear at the seat of his government to conduct its affairs. Bavaria, consequently, was lost to Bismarck.

Mr. Richter's treatment of Ludwig's commitment is a fair one, if one overlooks his repugnance to the diagnosis of "paranoid," and his deflection of attention from this point by an attack on Ludwig's psychiatrists. His attack is largely founded on the premise that psychiatric diagnosis of a king is difficult for examiners not themselves of royal blood. Ludwig's variations in sexual perversion, his mad building ventures, his sadistic and sometimes lethal treatment of his personal staff, and his seclusiveness and secretiveness, the author seems to write off as a type of regal whimsy.

The fact that several other members of the royal family were mentally unstable is duly noted. Ludwig's brother Otto was declared insane and committed, and perhaps Mr. Richter's acceptance of this circumstance depends on Otto's rank as a mere prince in the household. Similarly, the author records the interesting history of Ludwig's aunt, a gifted woman who was only slightly inconvenienced by her delusion that she had swallowed a glass piano. Had Ludwig's illness been confined to one such rather endearing channel, he would not have become notorious, but he might have been less confusing to some of his biographers.

REVIEWERS

Vivian Mercier, a member of the faculty at the City College of New York, contributes to The Commonweal, the *Hudson Review*, and other publications.

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